

Dennis Kavanaugh, Appropriations Presentation, January 25, 2005

CHAIRMAN BOONE AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Dennis Kavanaugh...I have served as a member of the Arizona Commission on the Arts since 1999 and have served as Commission chair since 2003. I was Vice-Mayor of the City of Mesa and have served for 8 years on the Mesa City Council. I am also an attorney in private practice, and in a past life, having served as an attorney for the Arizona Legislative Council.

We are very pleased by the JLBC recommendation to maintain our budget at the current level. We believe that this is a vote of confidence from you that we are doing a good job in delivering quality programs and services to the citizens of the state.

Our 15 member board supports the increased appropriation of the Arts Commission by \$500,000 for community service projects to replace the funds that were reduced in the tightest of budget years. These funds will bring us back to the 2002 level. The most important thing is that funds will help us support the growing and meaningful services that the agency provides to the citizens of the state.

We also desperately need a new telephone system; it does not work when it rains; it is so old that parts are not easily available to repair it; sometimes the public waits 2 minutes for a ring; even our budget analysts could not reach us.

Although we have become smaller, we remain determined to serve the citizens and fulfill our mission and mandate from our strategic plan. The taxpayer's hard-earned dollars are being utilized with maximum efficiency. Any potential increase will support programs in communities; with no additional administrative dollars. Our staff has not grown in numbers over the past 20 years.

Every three years we must submit a proposal for funding to the National Endowment for the Arts; they just completed their rigorous peer review process this week. I am pleased to report that our agency is the top ranked of the 19 states being reviewed. We are valued for the creativity and quality of our work in reaching out to new

communities, to supporting strategies to improve the quality of education through the arts and connecting artists and arts organizations to the widest range of our population.

I'd like to take a moment to talk about the business case for Arizona's support for the arts. In contrast to many other states we make a relatively modest investment in the arts. Our budget this year represents 65 cents per capita. These state funds leverage over 100 million dollars in contributions by individuals, foundations and corporations.

The arts also mean jobs for Arizonans. A recent study by Americans for the Arts shows that there are over 43,000 jobs in the non-profit and commercial arts industry in Arizona. This is a significant industry cluster and our state investment in the non-profit arts helps to keep that industry healthy and bring back tax revenue to state and local governments.

You know that Arizona has tough competition for jobs. In order to compete with other states for new business and knowledge workers, we need to have diverse arts activities. We know that people have many choices of where to live and our economic development experts tell us that people choose places with a diverse, active and authentic mix of arts and cultural activities. We are fortunate to have attracted T-Gen and associated science-related jobs to Arizona. Those companies and employees want access to quality arts experiences. From a recent study in Maricopa County we know that we invest the least in our arts and cultural community among the communities we compete with, including Seattle, Portland, San Diego, Denver and Atlanta.

People who travel to Arizona also look for a mix of things to do when they come here. They enjoy our weather and Cubs baseball in Mesa but they also look to what is unique about Arizona....things that are different than the chains found everywhere, like our Arizona Museum for Youth or Heard Museum.

Our Commissioners along with our staff have the responsibility and accountability for our state's investment in the arts. The Arizona Commission on the Arts is one of most respected and successful arts

agencies in the country. We know we make a difference in our Arizona quality of life.

I would now like our director Shelley Cohn to talk specifically about the impact we make in Arizona.